From: Wizard
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/14/01 6:19pm
Subject: Microsoft Antitrust Settlement

To whom it may concern:

    As a software developer for nearly 20 years, I find myself concerned with the details of the proposed settlement in Microsoft's antitrust case. As stated, I have been developing software for Microsoft's operating systems (OSs) as well as OSs from Sun, DEC, HP, and Linux. Since the inception of Windows 95 however, I have shied-away from any sort of development on Microsoft's OSs. I have done so because I believe that by developing software for Microsoft OSs, I am condoning the behavior that Microsoft has in the past, and continues to, exhibit in regards to it's competition.

    I believe that any settlement with Microsoft that fails to directly and strongly address the central issue of the case by forbidding any similar practice in the future is irresponsible on the part of the DoJ. To this end, I believe that the DoJ must enforce a policy that does the following:

   o The DoJ must ensure that any computer system sold that can be
     a target for a Microsoft OS, must declare the separate price
     of that OS and sell it separately for that price. It can include
     additional Microsoft products as a "package" with the installed
     OS for no additional cost, but the base OS must be a separate
     cost.
   o Microsoft must make it's storage format for files of any and
     all of it's products that have benefited from it's monopoly.
     This would include all of the applications associated with it's
     Office suite, as well as Outlook Express, NetMeeting, and many
     others. This will help to level the playing field back to
     something that resembles fair. As it stands presently, the
     companies cannot compete as long as Microsoft is so far ahead.
   o Microsoft cannot be allowed to create proprietary network
     protocols. All protocols that are intended to communicate beyond
     the physical boundaries of the machine must become a matter of
     public record, without restrictions on it's use. Any and all
     network protocols should be approved by some governing body
     providing oversight in such a manner as to ensure
     interoperability with other OSs. Microsoft should not be
     allowed to extend existing protocols without first seeking
     public comment on such extensions, and then publishing all of
     the details of the proposed extension. It can however, add
     functionality to existing systems provided that such added
     functionality does not interfere in any way with the proper
     implementation of the existing systems, and provided that the
     specification of the existing systems allow for such added
     functionality.

I feel most strongly about the last item. Microsoft has already extended the Kerberos standard to meet it's own desires

(see http://www.usenix.org/publications/login/1997-11/embraces.html). This extension is not only proprietary, but it's not compatible with the existing Kerberos V5 standard. This has the interesting effect that the NT domain controller must be a Microsoft product, and that, I believe, is intentional.

The end result with what Microsoft is doing, is that it is intentionally developing it's OS in such a way as to make it extremely difficult to integrate other OSs into a Microsoft environment. With their existing monopoly, I believe that this is the HEART of why the antitrust settlement must take these items into account. As long as Microsoft is allowed to continue to benefit from it's monopoly status, there will never be any real competition in the marketplace, and that is just un-American.

Thank you for your time,

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